

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3830
INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 13609

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, IN, AF
SUBJECT: INDIAN VIEW OF AFGHANISTAN

REF: (A) KABUL 7159; (B) KABUL 7187; (C) KABUL 6840

1. MEA JOINT SECRETARY I.P. SINGH WAS OBVIOUSLY NON-PLUSSED WHEN AT MEETING WITH POL COUNSELOR SEPTEMBER 6 HE WAS TOLD THAT EMBASSY HAD JUST LEARNED (REF A) OF KABUL RADIO'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT FOREIGN MINISTER VAJPAYEE WOULD VISIT AFGHANISTAN BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 8. SINGH SAID THAT THIS HAD NOT BEEN AGREED TO, THOUGH IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT THE MINISTER WOULD STOP AT KABUL ON WAY BACK FROM MOSCOW NEXT WEEK. (PRESS THIS MORNING CARRIES BRIEF STORY TO THIS EFFECT.)

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2. ACCORDING TO SINGH, GOI IS NOT HAPPY ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF VISIT. IDEA OF KABUL STOP WAS FIRST RAISED WITH VAJPAYEE AT BELGRADE BY AFGHAN FOREIGN MINISTER AMIN, HE SAID. VAJPAYEE WAS UNENTHUSIASTIC, MENTIONING TO AMIN THAT FOREIGN SECRETARY MEHTA HAD ONLY RECENTLY VISITED KABUL, AND SUGGESTING INSTEAD THAT AMIN COME TO INDIA. AMIN PERSISTED, HOWEVER, AND AFTER

VAJPAYEE'S RETURN TO INDIA IT WAS DECIDED HE SHOULD STOP ON WAY TO MOSCOW. THIS WAS CONVEYED TO DRA BY INDIAN CHARGE THREE DAYS BEFORE QADER PURGE WAS ANNOUNCED. THIS DEVELOPMENT MADE A VAJPAYEE VISIT TO KABUL EVEN LESS ATTRACTIVE TO THE GOI, SINGH SAID. THE SUBSEQUENT HOSPITALIZATION OF VAJPAYEE FOLLOWING A STONE-THROWING ATTACK BY A GROUP OF STUDENTS PROVIDED A WAY FOR THE FOREIGN MINISTER TO DUCK OUT OF THE PRE-MOSCOW STOP, BUT SINGH ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE MIGHT BE OBLIGED TO GO THERE AFTER VISITING THE USSR. THE MESSAGE SINGH WANTED TO CONVEY WAS THAT THE GOI IS NOT INTERESTED IN DEMONSTRATING CLOSE SUPPORT FOR THE KABUL GOVERNMENT IN THE WAKE OF THE LATEST PURGES, RUES ITS EARLIER COMMITMENT TO THE VISIT, BUT CAN'T GET OUT OF IT WITHOUT SENDING SIGNALS TO KABUL THAT IT IS NOT HAPPY WITH WHAT HAS RECENTLY BEEN GOING ON THERE.

3. SINGH'S BROADER DISCUSSION OF AFGHAN DEVELOPMENTS GENERALLY FOLLOWED THE ASSESSMENT MADE IN KABUL 6840 AND INCLUDED MOST OF THE POINTS MADE ON MATTERS AFGHAN TO EMBASSY KABUL BY AMBASSADOR S.K. SINGH (REF B), FOR WHOM I.P. SINGH AND OTHERS AT MEA ALSO HAVE HIGH REGARD. THESE INCLUDED THE ALLEGATIONS ABOUT CHINESE ACTIVITY. HE STRESSED THE NARROWING BASE OF THE DRA, BUT SAID THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE IT IN ANY CURRENT DANGER OF OVERTHROW EITHER FROM WITHIN THE RULING GROUP (INCLUDING MILITARY ELEMENTS) OR ELSEWHERE. HOWEVER, DISCONTENT WAS RAMPANT AND THE REGIME HAS IN HIS VIEW SOWED SEEDS WHICH COULD LEAD TO ITS EVENTUAL DOWNFALL.
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4. SINGH AGREED THAT THE DRA WAS BECOMING INCREASINGLY DEPENDENT ON THE SOVIETS, AND ESTIMATED THAT THERE MIGHT NOW BE AS MANY AS ONE THOUSAND SOVIET MILITARY ADVISORS IN THE COUNTRY (THOUGH HE THOUGHT THE FIGURE WAS PROBABLY MUCH LESS THAN THAT). HE DESCRIBED THE SOVIETS AS JUBILANT OVER THE PURGE OF QADER, A NATIONALIST, AND MORE LIBERAL TYPE WHOM IN HIS VIEW THEY BLAMED FOR THE EARLIER PURGE OF THE PARCHAMISTS. SINGH ARGUED, HOWEVER, THAT DESPITE THE JAILING OF QADER HE REMAINED A POTENTIALLY IMPORTANT FIGURE AND SHOULD NOT BE COUNTED OUT.

5. SINGH SAID THERE WERE THOSE IN THE KHALQIST GROUP WHO FELT THAT TARAKI AND AMIN HAD MOVED TOO SWIFTLY IN PURGING THEIR RIVALS. HE SUGGESTED THE WATANJAR MIGHT BE IN THAT GROUP. HIS FIRST REACTION TO WORD OF THE RECALL OF THE PARCHAMIST AMBASSADORS (WHICH WE PASSED TO HIM LATER) WAS THAT IT MIGHT BE A MOVE, PROMPTED BY THE SOVIETS, TO BRING ABOUT A RECONCILIATION OF THE TWO FACTIONS, BROADENING THE BASE OF THE REGIME, AND PRESUMABLY KEEPING THE TWO SIDES OFF BALANCE TO THE SOVS' OWN ADVANTAGE.
GOHEEN

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